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ABSTRACT

The paper describes vocational education approaches designed to prepare severely handicapped students for nonsheltered, meaningful work. Training is cumulative, beginning with early childhood training and continuing through middle school, high school, and transition stages. Ecological strategies are advocated to match characteristics of non-school training sites (opportunity for interactions, adequate accessibility and space, access to transportation, access to other community resources) to student characteristics. Procedures involved in securing training sites are noted, includng making initial contacts with community businesses, writing a training agreement, and maintaining and expanding non-school vocational training sites. Emphasis is placed on the opportunity for longitudinal vocational instruction, individual adaptations to enhance maximum participation, and systematic vocational instruction. Appended are samples of a student profile, an initial contact form, an information sheet, an initial meeting form, a site evaluation form, a training agreement form, and a parent permission form for community job training placement. (CL)

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VOCATIONAL TRAINING:

ARE ECOLOGICAL STRATEGIES APPLICABLE FOR SEVERELY MULTIHANDICAPPED STUDENTS?[1]

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of educational programs for individual severely handicapped students is to prepare each for maximal functioning across the range of environments and activities typically available to most nonhandicapped adults. When we examine the environments in which adults function, the primary activities that occur in each can be ascribed to one of the following life spaces, or domains: the domestic domain; the general community domain; the recreation/leisure domain; or the vocational domain (Brown, Branston-McLean, Baumgart, Vincent, Falvey & Schroeder, 1979).

A preparatory longitudinal educational program for a severely handicapped student must include instruction across individually relevant environments and activities from all four domains. Thus the aim of a preparatory program is not that students be taught to function primarily in a school building but to function maximally in nonschool environments; to function in those environments currently frequented during after school and weekend hours and to prepare for those environments and activities in which an individual will choose or be required to function subsequently. Therefore, a longitudinal curriculum for a severely handicapped student must be comprehensive across domains and cumulative as chronological age increases.

There are approximately six to eight hours each day, five days per week, 50-52 weeks per year during which most adults engage in some type of meaningful vocational activity. What makes a vocational activity meaningful? To be meaningful: must there be a direct exchange of money for services?; must a task be completed by only one person?; or must a specific production rate be achieved? Individuals engaged in work activities with compensation ranging from indirect pay for services to full time salaried employment all have something in common. They are performing meaningful work. That is, they are engaged in tasks that if not done by them, would have to be done by someone else (Brown, Ford, Nisbet, Shiraga, VanDeventer, Sweet & Loomis, 1983). This is unlike much so called "prevocational work" which often involves the creation of artificial tasks to teach skills such as matching, sorting, color/size/shape discrimination, assembly and packaging, and frequently requires undoing once done. Meaningful work is not artificially created. Certainly, direct payment for services, independence and competitive production rates are desirable, but work is meaningful because it is necessary. Someone has to do it. The position offered here is that engaging in meaningful work is fundamental to any vocational training. Furthermore, the places in which severely handicapped students perform meaningful work should be nonsheltered in nature.

This paper will review strategies currently used by many teachers within the Madison Metropolitan School District when providing vocational services for severely handicapped students. Discussion will center on whether additional and/or different strategies are needed when planning nonsheltered, nonschool vocational training for severely multihandicapped students. Use of the term "severely multihandicapped" is not an attempt to enlarge an already cumbersome student labeling system. Rather, it is an attempt to use a descriptor which might serve to emphasize the unique needs of individuals who comprise a small group

of severely handicapped students. The term "severely handicapped students" has been used to refer to the lowest intellectually functioning 1% of the school age population (Brown, 1981). The term severely multihandicapped student is used here to refer to students functioning within that same intellectual range, who, in addition, have significant sensorial, motoric and health-related impairments which further challenge the kind and degree of participation they may have while performing daily life functions. Many presumed differences and possible unique characteristics attributed to severely multihandicapped students have prompted questions regarding their vocational training. Section IV of this paper is devoted to responding to some of these questions while Sections II and III will provide A Framework for Longitudinal Vocational Training and Ecological Strategies for Providing Vocational Training Services.

II. A FRAMEWORK FOR LONGITUDINAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Since 1976, the Madison Metropolitan School District has provided severely handicapped students with systematic vocational training in nonsheltered community sites (Pumpian, Baumgart, Shiraga, Ford, Nisbet, Loomis & Brown, 1980). There is a framework for vocational training at all school levels from early childhood through high school. This framework, provided below describes the major emphases at each level; however, please note that training is cumulative from one school level to the next.

Early Childhood Training

Many components of the early childhood program, although rarely labeled as such, are preparatory for functioning in subsequent vocational environments. Teaching young children to assume responsibility for their belongings; to share materials with friends; to differentiate that some places are for certain activities and require specific response sets; to perform tasks that occur on a routine basis; to follow directions; and to communicate a variety of requests, questions and comments are but a few examples of early childhood vocational training.

Elementary School Training

In elementary schools students whose ages range from approximately 5-11 years are assigned responsibilities to be carried out in the classroom, in other areas of the school building and/or on school grounds. Teachers delineate jobs which might be meaningful in other environments as well, such as sweeping a floor, emptying a wastebasket, delivering a message, washing a table, watering plants and collating the school newsletter. The meaningful aspect of these jobs lies in the fact that they all need to be done. If the task is not done by the student, someone else will do it. Although the student receives instruction on how to perform a specific job, the primary emphasis at this chronological age level is on work attitude and behavior. Attitudinal and behavioral skills are taught through experiences such as receiving special

attention for a task completed, performing an assigned job even though other students may be engaging in recreational activities, attempting as much of a task as possible independently and then communicating the need for assistance, and initiating work and steps within a job sequence. When a student leaves elementary school, it is desirable that she/he be able to work for at least thirty minutes in preparation for middle school vocational training (Ford, Johnson, Pumpian, Stengert & Wheeler, Note 1).

Middle School Training

Middle schools serve severely handicapped students who range in chronological age from approximately 11-15 years. It is at the onset of these years that a student first receives vocational training in a nonschool environment for at least one half day per week. A variety of vocationally related skills are emphasized as they are needed in and apply to work environments. The phrase "vocationally related skills" refers to the variety of performance requirements critically needed to prepare for, travel to, and function in a work environment in addition to the specific skills required to do a job. These might include reading, time and money skills, utilization of public transportation, community orientation and mobility skills, social interaction skills, acceptable responses to frustration and general problem solving skills. Certainly the intent is not to match an individual student with one job at this young age and continue that training through 10-15 years of schooling. Given four years of middle school, each student will receive training in approximately four different nonschool vocational environments. Specific student work preferences and abilities are recorded in progress reports as the variety of training experiences accrue (Pumpian, Shiraga, VanDeventer, Nisbet, Sweet, Ford & Loomis, 1981). During the last year of middle school the amount of nonschool vocational instruction a student receives typically increases from one to two half days per week in preparation for the requirements of high school training.

High School Training

High schools serve severely handicapped students ranging in chronological age from approximately 15-21 years. When entering high school most students receive nonschool vocational training for two half days per week with continued emphasis on vocationally related skills. Given six to seven years of high school, a student at the age of 21 will have received training in as many as 10 different nonschool vocational environments and performed at least five different types of work, such as clerical, hotel housekeeping, dishwashing, food preparation, and custodial.

Transition Training

During the last two years of high school, when a student is 20-21 years old, she/he is considered "in transition". At this time the vocational transition teacher reviews the training experiences a student has had and then with the input of parents/guardians, other teachers, related staff and significant others, identifies reasonable postschool work possibilities. Based on

this information and input, a vocational site is secured and the necessary training and supervision is provided by the transition teacher. Every attempt is made to structure the work routine so that it resembles that which the student is likely to experience during the first year out of school. This would involve, for example, learning to travel directly from home to work four to five times per week rather than from school and gradually increasing the amount of hours worked. During the transition years the balance of instructional time is changed significantly so that more is spent in nonschool rather than inschool environments. Certainly, this is not to suggest that learning stops, but that the best use of instructional time is to provide direct instruction in the nonschool environments in which the upcoming graduate will be functioning.

In addition, during these years critical relationships are developed between the student and her/his parents/guardians, the transition teacher and the adult service agency which will continue supervision as needed. These relationships serve to enhance the likelihood that a student will maintain her/his nonsheltered vocational position upon graduation (see Brown, et al., 1983 for a description of the transitions made by severely handicapped students since 1979).

This vocational training framework does not supersede individual student needs which might require a variation in service delivery. However, it is important to re-emphasize two principles upon which the framework was developed: 1) Vocational training should occur in nonsheltered, nonschool environments; and 2) All students must be taught to engage in meaningful work.

III. ECOLOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR PROVIDING VOCATIONAL TRAINING SERVICES

An "ecological" strategy is defined here as one in which the relationship between a student and her/his community and immediate surroundings is used to target educational objectives. This section will briefly describe strategies for providing vocational training that are either directly or indirectly ecological in nature.

A. Developing a Relevant Student Profile

A relevant student profile should consist of basic personal status and current performance information from which responsible vocational training decisions can be made. In addition to past vocational experience and performance, information needed for maximal instruction includes current assessments of what the student can do in areas such as: domestic living; community functioning; recreation/leisure skills; and communication skills. Furthermore, pertinent information regarding motoric functioning, vision and hearing, academic skills, behavior and social skills, and health should be compiled. Then, prior to determining an appropriate training site, an instructor must be aware of basic mobility and physical status information to determine accessibility and space needs. A sample Individual Student Profile form can be found in APPENDIX A.

B. Characteristics of Nonschool Vocational Training Sites

A vocational training site is a nonschool environment in which approximately two to four students receive direct instruction in vocational and related skills. At least four characteristics of nonschool sites essential for appropriate vocational training are briefly explained below. Additional characteristics have been presented previously by Falvey, Ferrara-Parrish, Johnson, Pumpian, Schroeder & Brown, 1979.

1. Opportunity for Interactions

The variety of styles and spontaneity of interactions that occur naturally in many nonsheltered vocational environments contribute to the social climate desired to foster positive interaction and communication skills by individual severely handicapped students. Some jobs require interactions due to the nature of the work. For example, this is the case for the person who checks identification or membership cards before giving a clean towel at a gym. Food preparation, clerical work and hotel housekeeping are but a few examples of jobs that, although not necessarily requiring frequent interaction, provide ample opportunity for both work related and social interaction with co-workers or patrons. Environments where opportunities for interaction with nonhandicapped individuals are not typically available should be avoided.

2. Adequate Accessibility and Space

Accessibility refers here to several aspects of an environment. Given the physical structure of a place, will the student of concern: a) be able to get inside; and b) once inside, be able to utilize a variety of areas within the building, e.g., the restroom, break room, storeroom? The space factor relates specifically to her/his designated work area(s). Within the assigned area, is there room to accommodate the student(s) who will receive training?

3. Access to Transportation

Decisions must be made regarding the travel skills a student must learn to get to and from work. Therefore the location of the training site is important. Will the student walk, use regular public transportation, specialized public vehicles, teacher owned vehicles, etc.? Determining accessibility to public transportation, the amount of travel time, cost and the reliability of the service, will all contribute to the prioritizing of possible training sites for an individual.

4. Access to Other Community Resources

Given that vocational training is only one component of a comprehensive curriculum, it is advantageous to select training sites located near a variety of community and recreation/leisure environments. Access to restaurants, libraries, stores and other

resources make it possible to teach students how to utilize these environments during nonwork hours.

C. Securing Nonschool Vocational Training Sites

Once personal status information has been acquired and the important characteristics of a vocational training site for a particular student ascertained, the process of securing a training site must begin. Following is a sequential outline of how a training site can be secured.

1. Inventory Possible Training Sites

Initial determinations of possible training sites may be very general. For example, one might simply list the businesses within the community in which a student lives (Falvey, et al., 1979). Subsequent determinations, however, should be more specific. For example, businesses might then be organized according to the nature of the work performed. This could lead to a listing of potential clerical sites, custodial sites, hotel housekeeping sites, food preparation sites, laundry sites, etc. With such a list and relevant information about a specific student, a vocational instructor can begin to evaluate whether an environment and the skills required therein will provide a good training experience for that student.

Other methods of identifying possible training sites include securing input from personal acquaintances, family members, neighbors, and parents/guardians of students. Business people themselves often provide referrals to other training sites.

2. Make Initial Contact With Community Businesses

The person to contact in a possible vocational training site will vary from one business to another. Businesses such as fast food chains, sit-down restaurants and gas stations are often owned by persons other than those who manage them; however, the manager is a reasonable first contact in these smaller businesses. In larger establishments, such as hospitals, hotels or office buildings, a department coordinator, division head or director of personnel might be the most appropriate person to contact. If the initial person contacted feels that utilizing a business facility for vocational training is not a decision that can be made without approval from a more senior supervisor, she/he can recommend how to proceed.

Contact may need to be made with several people before a decision will or can be made. In the case of a site with union regulations, it may be requested that the vocational training program be explained to a union representative. This is not necessarily a negative sign. One training site developer projected that a request to speak with union representatives meant they would reject the training program because of concern over losing needed work for union members. After presenting the goal of the vocational training program to union members, she learned

their concern was to ensure that severely handicapped individuals receiving training would not be exploited.

There are certainly different methods of making contact, however a telephone call is often the most efficient. In many businesses, a secretary or receptionist screens and requests information about the nature of the call. With this information she/he may identify the most appropriate person with whom to talk. If that person is unavailable, it is good practice to ask what time is best to return the call and take responsibility for doing so, as compared to leaving a message.

A walk-in introduction and request for a meeting might be a reasonable alternative, especially in the case of a small business. Whatever method of contact selected, being prepared at any point to answer questions is important.

The time to make contact is when your call or presence is least likely to interfere with normal business operation. For example, call a food service business at times other than meal-times. If busy hours are more difficult to determine, call and, if unable to get through, ask for a more suitable time to try again.

The major purpose of an initial contact is to arrange a face to face meeting. Request this by providing some basic data including: your name and relationship to the school system; some general information about the training program; and the desire to meet and provide additional information about the program. Estimate the amount of time needed and offer to meet the employer at a time that is most convenient for her/him. If there is interest and an appointment made, restate the date, day of the week, time and location of the meeting to ensure agreement and avoid misunderstanding. A sample Initial Contact Form can be found in APPENDIX B. In addition, some basic information about the program might be sent as a follow-up to this contact prior to the scheduled meeting. A sample Information Sheet can be found in APPENDIX C.

3. Conduct an Initial Meeting With Community Business Contacts

Physical appearance and personal manner often create a powerful first impression. Prior to entering a meeting of this nature consider the purpose and desired outcome. The clearest, most obvious reason for the meeting is to secure a community vocational training site for a severely handicapped student. A less obvious but nevertheless critical outcome is the public relations component. Whether or not a training site agreement results, information about the potential of handicapped individuals to learn to perform meaningful work in nonsheltered environments is being communicated. Those educators who meet with business persons in the community represent not only themselves but the school system that employs them and even more importantly the severely handicapped individuals they serve. The impression made during this meeting therefore involves not only the content of the porposal but also the appearance and manner of the presentor. Dressing in accordance

with the dress code of the particular business contacted is a good rule to follow. Additionally, keep in mind that a business person is not a colleague. Lay terms should be used, rather than educational jargon when explaining the purpose of nonschool vocational training. When talking about students, speak of individuals who require direct training because of their unique learning and performance characteristics as compared to going into great detail about their handicapping conditions or delineating diagnoses. Highlight the fact that the business community offers the best place to provide training for such students.

Plan an agenda for the meeting and adhere to the amount of time requested. Some agenda items are suggested below:

(a) Include a brief statement explaining the purpose of the vocational training program. Explain, for example, that students vary in individual strengths and weaknesses, that simulated work experiences have been tried with others and proven ineffective and that these students require actual nonschool vocational experience to acquire the appropriate work skills and attitudes that are important to success in postschool nonsheltered work environments;

(b) If other training sites have already been utilized in the community, share this information. In addition, if a business person from another training site is willing to serve as a reference in support of the program, this name and telephone number might be offered;

(c) Explain that a job sequence will be taught based on the requirements of the business. These requirements will be learned by the vocational instructor, either by observing a nonhandicapped employee in the course of performing the activity in which a severely handicapped student will be taught to engage, or as a result of being trained directly by the employer. This process ensures that when a student is being trained, she/he is taught in such a way that the finished product is the same as would be expected of a nonhandicapped employee;

(d) It is important to stress that supervision of students and quality control of their work will be the responsibility of the vocational instructor. However, it is also important to indicate that any direction or involvement by employers and/or employees would be welcome;

(e) Ask for a tour of the work place and a brief description of the activities occurring in each section; and

(f) In addition, be prepared to respond to questions related to liability, pay, supervision, and length of involvement by students. A sample Initial Meeting Form can be found in APPENDIX D, and a Site Evaluation Form in APPENDIX E.

D. Writing a Training Agreement

After evaluating, subsequently deciding to use a work environment for training purposes and receiving consent, the instructor should develop a written training agreement. The purpose is to delineate: the nature of work to be performed by the student(s); the day(s) of training; the hours of training; who will assume responsibility for assigning work; the number of students to receive training; the instructor(s) who will provide training; and the location(s) within the training site where work will be performed. It should be stressed that this agreement is for purposes of clarity and communication and can certainly be changed or terminated by the contact person at any time. A sample Training Agreement Form can be found in APPENDIX F.

E. Implementing Nonschool Vocational Training Plans

1. Assigning Vocational Training Sites

Determining which students will go to a specific environment, which students will receive training together and on what day(s) and during which part of the day this training will occur, is a puzzle that can be put together effectively when rationales are clearly evaluated and some considerations carefully addressed. The following are at least some of the considerations.

a. Individual Student Needs

Much information can be gained about individual student needs by compiling a student profile (Section III) and evaluating the past vocational experiences of a student. For example, has the nature of past experiences been "desk" work during which little physical activity was required or "custodial" work which requires a great deal of physical activity? One question that might be asked at this point in training is, "What type of experience will broaden the vocational repertoire of this student?" Another question that might be asked is, "Will a continuation of training in the most recent site be advantageous for this student?"

b. Parent/Guardian Preferences

When talking with parents/guardians it is important to provide the longitudinal framework of vocational training. Without this information a common response might be that such young children should not be tracked into a specific job. It must be clear that longitudinal training is comprised of work experiences in a variety of environments. Another concern related to younger children, e.g., middle school age students, is that leaving the school building means removing them from the classroom, thus neglecting some possibly needed academic training. Having information about the current levels of functioning of the student of concern in academic areas such as reading, money-handling, time and communication skills should enable discussion about the ways in which these skills can be taught, applied and performance verified in actual vocational environments. Concern over a child being in the

community on city buses, at bus stops, walking down the street, etc., may arise. It should be pointed out that some of the reasons for providing nonschool vocational training are to address those very concerns; and that vocational training is planned instructional time designed to teach the safety and judgment skills associated with those community environments generally accessed by nonhandicapped persons.

After the framework for vocational training has been explained, ask parents/guardians if they have preferences or suggestions for a training site or type of work. In the event that no preferences or suggestions are stated, be prepared to recommend a site and the rationale for this choice. The general inventories previously conducted should enable informed responses to questions and concerns. Have an alternate site recommendation in the event that strong rationales are presented against the first.

c. Student Grouping

Heterogeneity and natural proportion are both vital concerns when planning nonschool vocational training. Heterogeneity refers to a student grouping arrangement based on individual differences rather than similarities. For example, a group of three students might be comprised of two who have some speech skills and one who uses an individualized communication board or two who are ambulatory and one who uses a manual wheelchair. Consider at least some of the educational advantages of heterogeneous arrangements. Certainly, the variety and number of jobs that can be performed in a work site increase with the range of student abilities. For example, a student with a more sophisticated skill repertoire might be asked to do a high-rate job, while another student can work on a task having a less rigid time requirement. Furthermore, consider the advantages of pairing two students whose differing skill repertoires complement each other. Complementing abilities may mean that two students can be taught to perform a task together that at least one could not do alone. For example, an ambulatory student might be taught to assist a nonambulatory student move a wheelchair up a ramp, freeing the teacher to instruct a visually impaired student to learn a specific travel route.

Natural proportion refers to a ratio of handicapped to nonhandicapped persons in any one environment which approximates that existing in the general population (Brown, Ford, Nisbet, Sweet, Donnellan & Gruenewald, 1982). Consider the effect of entering a room and seeing a group of people, many drooling, many in wheelchairs, many with involuntary motor responses, many gesturing and vocalizing but hardly a word spoken, etc. Special educators recognize this to be a group of individuals who have handicapping conditions, skills and personalities. The general effect on noneducators, however, is to see only handicaps, overlooking the skills and personalities of each individual. A community does not have the opportunity to learn what an individual severely

handicapped student can do when nonschool instruction is provided in large homogeneous groups. Such groups have the effect of making severely handicapped individuals appear less able than they are.

d. Administrative Factors

With sites secured and training schedules in place, a number of administrative details must be addressed:

1) Transportation plans should be delineated, including mode, times, cost and back-up plans in the event of a problem;

2) Permission from parents/guardians should be secured in writing and kept on file. A sample Permission Form can be found in APPENDIX G;

3) The building principal should also provide written permission either by co-signing with parents/ guardians on individual student forms or by signing an overall vocational training schedule;

4) Emergency telephone numbers and procedures for each student should be secured and kept with the vocational instructor; and

5) General health information which might include possible seizure disorders, medication, allergies and appropriate procedures must be documented.

F. Developing Nonschool Vocational Training Sites

1. Nonhandicapped Employee Inventory

A nonhandicapped person, or employee, inventory (Brown, Falvey, Vincent, Kaye, Johnson, Ferrara-Parrish & Gruenewald, 1979) involves actually observing employees in their work environment and recording the sequence of skills required to engage in select activities. When conducting an inventory of, for example, a hotel housekeeper, it would be insufficient to simply record that in a hotel room beds were made, mirrors cleaned, furniture dusted, the bathroom cleaned, etc. It is necessary to record the sequential format of activities performed as well as details such as where sheets were tucked in and where they were left hanging, and whether the bedspread touched the floor. Additional measures that might be recorded include the length of time it takes a housekeeper to clean a whole room or make a bed. To secure specific information, an employee may need to be observed and questioned or the work tasks actually performed by the vocational trainer several times. While conducting this inventory the issue is not whether a student will or will not be able to perform the skills. That is a later concern. At this point in developing a vocational training site, the purpose is simply to record what a nonhandicapped person does while engaging in her/his usual duties.

For comprehensive training, vocationally related skills as well as those needed to perform a specific job task must be inventoried. Among the related skills that might be addressed are: time skills, e.g., when to leave for work, take a break, eat lunch, leave work; communication skills, e.g., greeting co-workers, asking questions, responding to gestures and directions; and math/money skills, e.g., how to utilize a vending machine, buy lunch in a cafeteria or restaurant, pay the fare on a bus.

2. Conducting a Discrepancy Analysis in the Training Site

Once the nonhandicapped employee inventories have been completed the delineation of short term objectives is needed. A discrepancy analysis process is one very effective method of doing this (Ford, Brown, Pumpian, Baumgart, Nisbet, Schroeder & Loomis, 1982). The process involves use of the nonhandicapped person, or employee, inventory as previously described. The performance by a severely handicapped student is referenced to that of a nonhandicapped person. By analyzing the corresponding steps between the nonhandicapped and handicapped persons, performance discrepancies can be noted. It is from these discrepancies that short term objectives can be derived and prioritized.

With the information gathered, some procedural decisions must be made. First, does available information suggest that the student can be taught to perform the discrepant steps in a topographically similar manner and in response to the same cue(s) as nonhandicapped persons? If this is the case, instructional objectives can be written and plans implemented to accomplish this. If, however, it is determined that the student will probably not learn to perform the step in a manner similar to nonhandicapped persons, a variety of adaptations might be created to achieve the desired end (Baumgart, Brown, Pumpian, Nisbet, Ford, Sweet, Messina & Schroeder, 1982). The following are only three types of individualized adaptations that would enable a student to participate in an activity to the maximum extent possible.

Utilizing/creating materials and devices; e.g., a student is taught to follow a sequence of custodial responsibilities by referring to a booklet with each page providing a cue for the next step in the job sequence.

Adapting skill sequences; e.g., a student is to combine a fork, spoon and knife for each place setting in a restaurant. Upon removing the silverware from a dishwasher rack, she is taught to presort before combining one of each for individual place settings. Here, a step is added to the sequence to reduce the complexity of the task.

Adapting rules; e.g., With permission from an employer, a student is taught to leave for lunch five minutes earlier than others because she/he needs the additional time to travel from the work area to the cafeteria.

G. Maintaining and Expanding Nonschool Vocational Training Sites

A major factor in both maintaining and expanding training sites is public relations. It is the responsibility of the vocational trainer to maintain smooth and open relations with training site personnel. A simple "Is everything all right? Do you have any suggestions?" might be all that is needed to uncover minor annoyances or misunderstandings before they become major problems which jeopardize the use of the site. A positive and professional attitude by a vocational trainer will go a long way toward helping others understand the instructional nature of the training program.

Quality control and completion of work are critical. During training this may often mean that a vocational instructor work along with students to ensure both. For example, if the head housekeeper in a hotel training site assigns a room to be cleaned, that room should be completely cleaned and meet the quality standards of that hotel prior to leaving the site, even if initially the vocational instructor has to complete or redo some of the work.

Visibility is an important element in expanding training to other subenvironments or departments within an existing training environment. Vocational instructors should use opportunities as they arise to introduce themselves and briefly explain the training program to individuals from other departments. In this way, after training is organized and under way in one area and it is advantageous to expand to another department there is a contact person within the area. Demonstration is often the best explanation of vocational training in a nonschool environment. When severely handicapped students are seen in action, receiving positive instruction and completing work which is equal to the quality of nonhandicapped standards, support generally follows. The task of expanding upon the tasks being performed in one area or moving into other areas may then only require a request by the vocational instructor and another negotiated training agreement to determine activities and times of training.

IV. QUESTIONS ABOUT PROVIDING VOCATIONAL TRAINING SERVICES FOR SEVERELY MULTIHANDICAPPED STUDENTS

A framework for vocational training was described in Section II and strategies for providing such services were briefly explained in Section III. Are these ecological strategies appropriate for severely multihandicapped students? The questions often posed are as follows:

1. Are there curricular domains more critical to multihandicapped students than vocational?
2. Is more or different student information required prior to vocational training for a multihandicapped student than for other severely handicapped students?
3. Are the characteristics of a training site different for multihandicapped students?
4. Will the process of securing a nonschool vocational training site be different if the student of concern is severely multihandicapped?
5. Will the process of developing a nonschool vocational training site be different if the student of concern is multihandicapped?
6. Will implementing nonschool vocational training be different if the student of concern is multihandicapped?
7. Should vocational training be provided even if postschool vocational services are not currently being provided to multihandicapped graduates?

Responses to the above questions follow:

1. Are there curricular domains more critical to multihandicapped students than vocational?

When it is accepted that a severely multihandicapped individual must be prepared to function across the same life spaces as most nonhandicapped persons, including domestic, recreation/leisure, general community and vocational, the question is certainly easier to answer. One frequently stated opinion about educational programming for severely multihandicapped students is that instruction in domestic functioning and recreation/leisure activities is needed more than vocational training. The question of need here is not one of more or less, but of balance and comprehensiveness. As an adult, a severely multihandicapped person can spend just so much time engaged in domestic or recreational activities, leaving a significant number of hours unoccupied. To feel valued, to contribute something that someone else needs, to experience and learn the difference between recreation and work, a person must be taught to perform or at least participate in some type of meaningful work.

And certainly, if it can be presumed that an individual will learn to at least participate in domestic and/or recreation/leisure activities, it follows that with the same systematic instruction, participation in vocational activities can be achieved.

2. Is more or different student information required prior to vocational training for a multihandicapped student than for other severely handicapped students?

Additional information may be needed. Therefore, an addendum might be attached to the Individual Student Profile (See APPENDIX A). Essentially, the additional information is: mode of mobility; seating/positioning requirements including time restrictions; movement(s) the student can make; individualized adaptations the student currently uses in any activity; and movement(s) the student should make for habilitative reasons. This information enables more informed decisions regarding the nature of work one might seek. For example, knowing that a student is using a Mulholland wheelchair and can purposefully move her left arm and hand but not her right would suggest that a training site with enough space to accommodate the wheelchair and tasks that do not require the use of both hands or could be adapted to be performed with one would need to be sought.

3. Are the characteristics of a training site different for multihandicapped students?

The characteristics identified as being desirable for a vocational training site included: opportunity for interactions; adequate accessibility and space; access to transportation; and access to other community resources. These are the same for a multihandicapped student. A major question often asked is whether coworkers in vocational environments would find it difficult to accept severely multihandicapped individuals. On the contrary, many nonhandicapped persons and coworkers who have witnessed the high expectations of vocational trainers and utilization of individualized adaptations to maximize student performance have made complementary and supportive comments. In some training sites nonhandicapped persons have gone so far as to make suggestions to improve individualized adaptations.

4. Will the process of securing a nonschool vocational training site be different if the student of concern is severely multihandicapped?

The process outlined in Section III, Part C for securing a nonschool vocational training site is not different when the student of concern is severely multihandicapped. However, one question which frequently arises is how much information to provide about the multihandicapping conditions of an individual student. Information requested about a student can honestly and simply be provided without violating the privacy of the student. Certainly information that will facilitate a clearer understanding of what an individual can do should be offered if requested, but the best way to communicate what a student can do is to allow her/him the opportunity to demonstrate.

5. Will the process of developing a nonschool vocational training site be different if the student of concern is severely multihandicapped?

The information secured through a nonhandicapped employee inventory is needed regardless of the handicapping conditions of the student of concern. In addition, the training agreement guarantees a standard of quality which requires detailed information to honor. Therefore, the process of developing a nonschool vocational training site must be the same for whomever will be trained there.

6. Will implementing nonschool vocational training be different if the student of concern is severely multihandicapped?

The same concerns related to maximizing student performance, maintaining a natural proportion and creating positive attitudes toward severely handicapped students are operative. One major factor in maximizing the performance by a multihandicapped individual, which may or may not be necessary with a less handicapped student, is the likely need for individualized adaptations. Implementing vocational training with severely multihandicapped students clearly requires a creative and cooperative effort by teachers and significant others toward the design of adaptive strategies and/or devices which enable maximal involvement by a multihandicapped individual, and a variety of supervision models both in kind and degree.

7. Should vocational training be provided even if postschool vocational services are not currently being provided for multihandicapped graduates in nonsheltered environments?

One of the best strategies special educators have to communicate the postschool service needs of severely multihandicapped students is demonstration. It is easier to advocate for and request nonsheltered vocational services for a student who can be observed participating maximally in a nonsheltered vocational environment than when a student has never been afforded the opportunity for training.

In summary, the position taken here is that when providing vocational training services to severely multihandicapped students:

1. All must be provided at least the opportunity for longitudinal vocational instruction;

2. Every attempt must be made to provide individualized adaptations which enable and enhance maximal participation;

3. From approximately age eleven on, vocational instruction should be provided in nonsheltered, nonschool vocational environments;

4. Training tasks must be meaningful; and

5. Each student must be systematically taught to participate in as many vocational and related activities as possible, utilizing all the expertise available and then some to reshape the vocational future for severely multihandicapped individuals.

Reference Note

Note 1. Ford, A., Johnson, F., Pumpian, I., Stengert, J. & Wheeler, J. (Eds.), A longitudinal listing of chronological age appropriate and functional activities for school aged moderately and severely handicapped students. Madison, WI: Madison Metropolitan School District, 1980.

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APPENDIX A

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PROFILE (Sample)

Identification and Related Information Date Compiled: _____

Name _____ S.S. #: _____
Date of Birth _____ C.A. _____
Location of Educational Program _____
District Responsible for Program _____
Instructors _____
Related Services _____
Date of Current Placement _____
Additional Information _____
_____

Domestic Information

Current Domestic Environment

a. Names of parents/guardians (or primary contact person, if other):
_____

b. Telephone number: home _____ work _____

c. Names and ages of others living at the same residence:

d. Additional information:

Educational Information

Educational History (programs/schools the student has attended and dates)

Summary of Present Level of Performance (specify environments and activities)

a. Domestic Living skills

APPENDIX A
(continued)

b. Community Functioning skills (including street safety & transportation skills)

c. Vocational skills

d. Recreation/Leisure skills

e. Academic skills (including reading, time and money skills)

f. Communication skills

APPENDIX A
(continued)

Motoric Information

Sensory Information (i.e., vision and hearing)

Behavior and Social Skill Information

Health Information

Other Relevant Information

APPENDIX A

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PROFILE - ADDENDUM (Sample)

Student Name: _____ Present School: _____

Chronological Age: _____ Date of Profile: _____

(Please indicate where specifications below are doctor prescribed.)

Mobility Mode(s) and Skills:

Any Seating/Positioning Requirements:

Movement(s) the Student Can Make:

Individualized Adaptations(s) Currently Used for Other Activities:

Activity	Adaptation	Student Performance

APPENDIX B

INITIAL CONTACT FORM (Sample)

Name of Business: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Referred by: _____

Date of Call: _____

Contact Person(s): _____ Title: _____

Telephone: _____

Outcome of Contact:

Meeting Scheduled:

With _____ Title: _____

Location _____ Telephone: _____

Day/Date _____

Amount of Time Agreed to _____

No Meeting Scheduled:

Reason Given _____

Follow-up Suggested _____

When _____

APPENDIX C
(Sample Information Sheet)

Madison Metropolitan School District

Donald A. Hafeman, Superintendent

545 West Dayton Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT'S VOCATIONAL PROGRAM

Purpose of the Program:

The vocational training program for handicapped students utilizes community facilities. The purpose is to provide students with the opportunity to receive realistic vocational experiences in a variety of Madison area businesses and organizations. The students receive training at these job training sites as part of their overall school program. Over 50 Madison area businesses, institutions and organizations are currently participating in the program.

Students:

All of the students are mentally handicapped. Some may have additional handicaps; e.g., physical, hearing, visual. The interests, abilities and past experiences of each student help determine the types of vocational training she/he experiences.

School Staff:

Supervision and training are provided by school personnel. A school staff person is present at all times while the students are working and is responsible for the quality control of all work done by students.

Community Job Sites:

The job site provides students with the opportunity to learn meaningful vocational skills in realistic work environments. This cannot be duplicated by any other means available to the Madison Metropolitan School District. Job site personnel are encouraged to become involved with the students to the degree in which they feel comfortable.

Days/Times/Number of Students:

The days and times that a job site is utilized, as well as the number of students at the site, are negotiated between each individual job site and school staff.

Examples of Job Sites and Jobs Currently Being Performed:

- UW Hospital and Clinics - labelling and ticketing hospital supplies, packaging surgical instruments, collating admission packets
- Howard Johnson's - housekeeping, laundry work, food service work
- Dane County Parks Office - janitorial work
- American Red Cross - simple clerical work, e.g., collating, labelling, stamping, envelope stuffing
- Ray O Vac - simple clerical work

References:

John Doe
Director of Central Services and Pharmacy
UW Hospital and Clinics
000-0000

Jane Doe
Housekeeping Supervisor
Howard Johnson's
000-0000

APPENDIX D

INITIAL MEETING FORM (Sample)

Name of Business: _____ Date _____

Persons Present: _____ Title _____ Phone_____

_____ Title _____ Phone_____

_____ Title _____ Phone_____

_____ Title _____ Phone_____

Areas to Cover:

_____ brief overview of vocational training

_____ case examples of vocational training

_____ development of specific training sequence

_____ supervision/quality control of work done by trainees

_____ tour

_____ other training sites

_____ other: note _____

_____ any questions?

APPENDIX D

(continued)

List possible activities during tour:

Subenvironment	Primary/other activities	Times

Follow-Up Plans

Name of Employee: _____

Date to Conduct Employee Inventory: _____

APPENDIX E

SITE EVALUATION FORM (SAMPLE)

Name of Business: _____

Opportunity for Interactions: _____

Accessibility and Space: _____

Access to Transportation: _____

Nonwork Subenvironments Within Site: _____

Safety Factors: _____

Other: _____

APPENDIX F

TRAINING AGREEMENT FORM (SAMPLE)

Date: _____

This training agreement form is to confirm the plans made to provide vocational training at (name of business) _____. We, the undersigned, agree to the following:

Day(s) and Dates of Training _____

Hours of Training _____

Primary Work Activities _____

Number of Students _____

Person(s) Who Will Give Work Assignments _____

Other _____

_____ signature: Employer

_____ signature: Teacher

APPENDIX G

PARENT PERMISSION FOR COMMUNITY JOB TRAINING PLACEMENT (SAMPLE)

JOBSITE: A) Location _____

B) Dates of Training _____

C) Day(s) of Training _____

D) Hours of Training _____

E) Description of Job Duties _____

SUPERVISION: A) Provided by MMSD teacher _____

B) Provided by a student teacher and/or other University of Wisconsin student in Behavioral Disabilities.

C) Provided on a spot check basis by the teacher. Due to the nature of the placement your son/daughter will not receive daily supervision.

TRANSPORTATION: A) Special bus/van _____

B) Teacher's personal car _____

C) City bus _____

D) Walks to job _____

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: _____

MATERIALS, MONEY, CLOTHES, ETC., TO BRING: _____

- -

I, _____ (Parent/Guardian), give permission for _____ (Student) to be involved in the above-described community job training program.

_____
Parent/Guardian Signature

_____
Date

I, _____ (Student's Name), agree to be involved in the above-described community job training program.

_____
Student Signature

_____
Date

Please sign and return one copy to: _____

MMSD/83